

CHECKERS



CAT. NO.
26-3055

Radio Shack

TRS-80

**COLOR
COMPUTER**

Checker King

Radio Shack®



A DIVISION OF TANDY CORPORATION
FORT WORTH, TEXAS 76102

First Edition

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Introduction


Checkers will never seem the same again now that you have the Checker King. You can play countless games with the computer at different levels, or test problems can be set up for you to solve. If you're tired of playing and just want to watch, there's also a special feature for demonstration games. Whatever your pleasure, sit back and enjoy the Checker King!

Setting Up


First, make sure that the joysticks are properly connected to the computer. Turn on the TV and turn the volume up slightly. Insert the Checkers cartridge in the slot on the right side of the computer. Next, when you turn on the computer, the title will appear, followed immediately by the checkerboard with the pieces already lined up.


Choosing Colors and Sides

You have two choices for screen colors. Initially, the board is light grey and turquoise, the Computer's pieces are orange and your pieces are pink. If you press  , the board will be green and yellow. The red pieces represent the Computer's pieces and the blue pieces are yours. You can get other color combinations by adjusting the TV color and tint controls to suit your own taste.

The Computer moves from the top of the screen to the bottom. If you'd like to switch sides with the Computer, press  .

Choosing the Level of Play

The Level (on the right hand side of the screen) is currently set at 4. You can choose any Level from 1 to 8 by pressing . 1 is the fastest and least challenging Level. Playing at Level 8 will take a long time because the Computer is searching three moves ahead to determine the best move. However, the Computer is at its best at Level 8 and is practically impossible to beat. Beware of treacherous strategies and maneuvers!

Press the  key five times, if you'd like to start at Level 1 and gradually work up to Level 8. Level 1 is ideal for beginners or for playing a fast game of checkers.

Moving the Marker

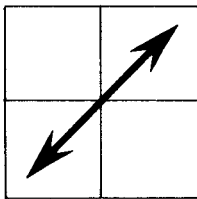
You can move the blinking marker around the board using the four arrow keys. The right and left arrows move the marker northeast and southwest. Press the up and down arrows to move the marker northwest and southeast. The marker will move one square each time an arrow key is pressed.



Right arrow



Left arrow

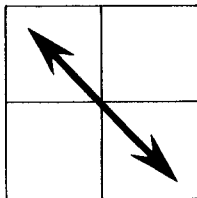





Up arrow





Down arrow



The marker will move from its home position on row 5 in the direction that is pressed. To avoid any distractions the marker does not appear until the arrow key is pressed.

You can also use the right joystick to move the marker by pressing the  key. Hold the joystick with the button closest to you. Simply move the joystick in the direction you want to go — right, left, up or down. The joystick moves the marker much faster than the arrow keys.

You only have to press  once. If you press  again, the joystick control will be disengaged, and you can use the arrow keys to move the marker. The marker will not appear until the joystick is moved.

The marker may occasionally appear without moving the joystick. This happens because the position of the joystick drifts slightly due to temperature, humidity or line voltage fluctuations. If this problem occurs, move the marker to one of the corners where it will remain more stable. Press the space bar twice to get rid of the marker, if it appeared by accident or if you've changed your mind about moving.

Moving a Piece

After you've chosen the piece you want to move, cover it with the marker and press the space bar. Now, move the marker to where you want to go and press the space bar again. The right joystick button or the **ENTER** key can also be used to move pieces. Pressing the space bar, the joystick button, or the **ENTER** key is equivalent to picking up the piece. It may then be moved around and positioned on a new square.

If you move a piece and then change your mind, just move it back to where it was originally. You will hear a beep-beep message indicating an illegal move. Now, you are free to move another piece.

If there is only one move available to you, the computer will automatically place the marker on that square, and start the move for you. Move the piece to the new position and press the space bar to complete the move. Remember that according to the rules of checkers, if you can make a jump over one of the opponent's pieces, you have to take it.

If you want to make more than one jump, jump over the first piece and press the space bar. Now, jump over the second piece and press the space bar again. After you've completed the entire move, your piece will be transferred to its new location. The captured pieces will disappear from the board.

Making the Computer Play

Press the **P** key to make the computer play. For example, if you want the computer to make the first move of the game, press **P**. If you begin the game by moving one of your pieces, the computer will automatically respond.

To watch a demonstration game, hold down the **SHIFT** key and press **D**. First, set the level of play to the desired difficulty and then press **SHIFT** and **D**. A new game will begin again after approximately 70 moves for each side. Press the **BREAK** key to stop the demonstration.

Taking Back a Move

The **T** key can be used to take back the last move. This option gives you a second chance if you made a bad move. When you press **T**, the Computer's piece and your piece will be returned to the position before your last move. If you make the same move again, the computer will probably make a different move, unless the first move it made is considered to be far superior to its second best alternative.

You can also use the **BREAK** key to take back a move. Press the **BREAK** key while the computer is thinking about its next move. The piece you moved (in your last turn) will be returned to its previous position, and you'll be able to reconsider the situation. You can now move the same piece or a different one, if you wish.

The **T** and **BREAK** keys interrupt the computer while it is thinking and affect the history files. The computer may respond with poorer moves since the strategy depends on the last three moves for each side as well as the current position. By pressing one of these two keys, you'll be lowering the level to speed up the play.

Adding or Changing a Piece

You can add or change a piece by pressing the **E** key. First, move the marker to the square (empty or occupied) you want to place a new piece on. Each time you press **E**, the piece will change and go through an entire cycle of available pieces — your piece, your king, a computer piece, a computer king and an empty square.

Clearing the Board

Hold down the **SHIFT** key while pressing **C**, to clear the board of all pieces. You can now add any pieces you want by using the **E** key to recreate a situation from a previous game.

Resigning or Restarting

Press the **SHIFT** and **R** keys at the same time, if you want to quit during a game. This will cause the board to be set up for a fresh game. At the end of a game, press the **SHIFT** and **R** keys to restart Checker King.

It is possible to end the game in an impasse, where both sides are repeating the same moves. If this occurs, press **SHIFT** and **R**.

Checker Problems

First, select the level number of the desired degree of difficulty. Next, press the **?** key for a test problem. You are pink (or blue) and the computer is orange (or red). The object is to win in as few moves as possible. The computer will defend.

When you are ready to see how the computer would play it, type **?** and **X** to turn the board around. Now, press **P** so that you are defending. It will take the computer less than 90 seconds to find the winning combination.

Key Code

- | | |
|----------|-------------------|
| C | To choose colors |
| X | To exchange sides |
| L | To choose levels |
| → | To move northeast |



To move southwest



To move northwest



To move southeast



To use the joystick



To move a piece



To make the computer play



To watch a demonstration game



To stop a demonstration game; also, to take back a move



To take back a move



To add or change a piece



To clear the board



To resign or restart



To see a test problem



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RADIO SHACK  **A DIVISION OF TANDY CORPORATION**

U.S.A.: FORT WORTH, TEXAS 76102

CANADA: BARRIE, ONTARIO L4M 4W5

TANDY CORPORATION

AUSTRALIA

**280-318 VICTORIA ROAD
RYDALMERE, N.S.W. 2116**

BELGIUM

**PARC INDUSTRIEL DE NANINNE
5140 NANINNE**

U. K.

**BILSTON ROAD WEDNESBURY
WEST MIDLANDS WS10 7JN**